

Southern Sketches.

—
CECH, GRAY;

OR THE SOLDIERS' FRIENDS.

—
ROSA SHERWOOD;

OR THE AVENGER.

BY MARY ANN DUNN,
LONDON: SMITH,

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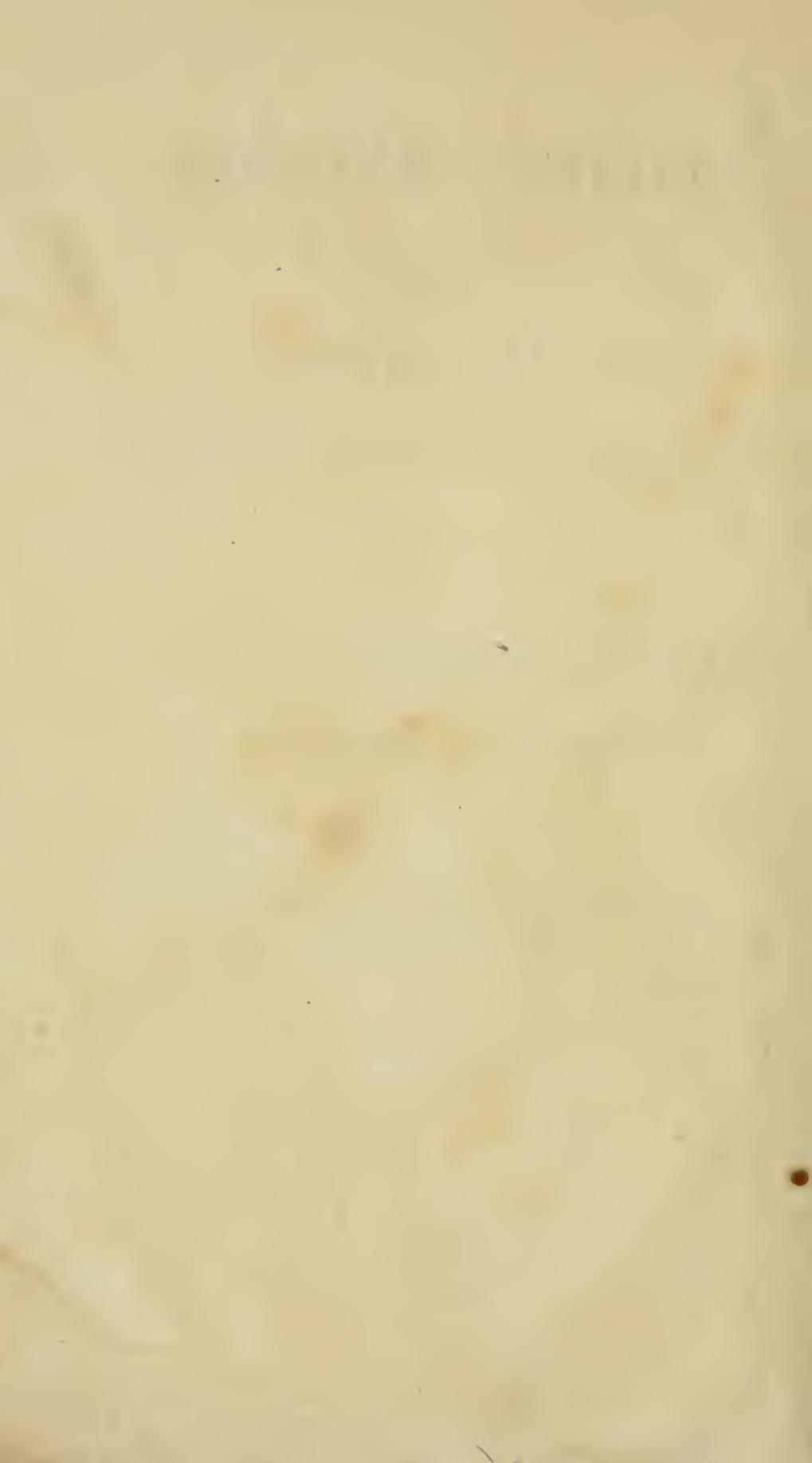
OR, THE AVENGER.

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NATIVE OF ALABAMA.

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CECIL GRAY;

OR, THE SOLDIER'S REVENGE.

SOFT twilight shades were deepening into night, and from the sky the stars were shining bright; and as the pale moon arose in queenly beauty, it shone through the window of a noble mansion in A., mantling with its silver lines the beautiful face of Cecil Gray, as she sat in pensive sadness gazing listlessly around upon the gorgeous furniture of her chamber. Near her was a small table, and upon it lay an open letter; the contents, perhaps, the cause of the gloom that had settled upon her beautiful countenance—fair Cecil Gray! wooed by all, won by whom? We will trespass a moment upon the rules of good breeding, and will look at the name of the writer of that *billet-doux*, lying open before her. I am sure we will not be seen by her, as her thoughts are too intent upon other things. Stop, I have seen it; 'tis the name of Walter Earnest. Cecil Gray thinks she loves him, yet the image of another dearer is ever rising before her mind as it grows more and more distinct; yet she feels that to banish or strive to cease thinking of Elbert Grant will accomplish her purpose; for will not an outward show of affection be sufficient for Walter Earnest, and is he not rich and distinguished as an eminent lawyer? Yes, it is decided, Walter Earnest, and no other, shall gain the hand of Cecil Gray. So, away with your wooing, Elbert Grant, for Cecil Gray is the affianced bride of Walter Earnest. What a victory to achieve! after having made many hearts ache beneath her bewitching glance.

Such were the thoughts of the proud beauty as we found her, so intent upon the future—the glory of the eclat that would follow her debut as Mrs. Lawyer Earnest.

Her train of thought, however, did not remain so triumphant very long, for an approaching footstep and a ring at the hall door warned her to prepare, with her many fascinating graces, for a visitor.

"Walter E——, I know," said Cecil, as she approached to open the door herself; and with a smile, but not for Elbert Grant, for it was no other than he, she bade him enter, and be seated. The sudden pallor that o'er spread her features betrayed an uneasy feeling, but to Elbert Grant, Cecil was lovelier than ever; 'twas some moments before either spoke a word, and when Elbert Grant did speak he broached upon a subject too painful to Cecil for her to hide her real feelings.

"What! Cecil Gray," said Elbert Grant, "after giving me every encouragement necessary to confirm it in my mind, that I was a favored suitor, and to one beloved: after having to un-

derstand that you have trifled with my feelings I am now to be spurned; and, too, after having poured out my all of love upon the shrine I thought so willing to return my adoration, what is my return? The dissembling smiles of an accomplished *côquette*, is all I have for requital for my almost sacred worship."

"Speak not so, Elbert Grant," said the pale and agitated Cecil; but not deigning a reply, and murmuring a hasty farewell, Elbert Grant departed.

And with a heavy heart did he pace the floor of his apartment, a small office in A., plainly but neatly furnished, containing a few of the luxuries of a student of medicine, unlike the sumptuous apartments of Walter Ernest. Walter E. and Elbert Grant had been friends and associates from childhood; but now that they both strove to gain the same prize—rivals in love—there was a growing enmity existing between them that it seemed nought could eradicate.

CHAPTER II.

After Elbert Grant departed, Cecil burst into a flood of tears, and with the most agonizing feelings, prepared to dress herself for an evening party to which W. Ernest had promised to accompany her.

After having gone through with all the graces of her toilet, and her maid having pronounced her dress complete, she quietly surveyed herself in an opposite mirror, and with a haughty air, she asked of her maid: "Do you not think me a prize worthy to be gained by any suitor?" Of course, her maid answered the question satisfactorily, and after having flattered her with all the honeyed words she knew was requisite to satisfy her mistress's pride, she descended the stairs with her mistress, and going before her to open the parlor door, they were suddenly confronted by W. Ernest, who, after passing the usual compliments upon the costume of his fair one, he proffered his arm for her acceptance. Bowing a triumphant assent, she took it, and its being the hour to repair to the Soiree at Mrs. Wilson's, and as it was but a short distance from Cecil's father's, they were soon mingling in the gay and mirthful crowd.

Cecil Gray was pronounced the belle of that bright assembly; and as murmurs of admiration ran through the gay crowd, all were willing to declare Cecil Gray the brightest star among them. There was one who watched her with an untiring eye, and whose thoughts were upon her alone; little dreaming that the haughty Cecil Gray was struggling between the duty of love for him and the smiles of a golden fortune.

Cecil Gray's parents were not rich but were styled well off, and through many worldly trials and hard struggles, had succeeded in laying up a small store for Cecil. After giving her a sound education, and as they said, after making a lady of her, they trusted her beauty for the rest. Thus far she had succeeded in playing her cards well as to the marrying of fortune, for she was soon to be the bride of Walter E.—.

CHAPTER III.

Cecil after having mingled for some time in the gay dance until she was beginning to feel fatigued, she sought the quiet of an adjoining gallery, where in its solitude she strove to lull the wild throbings of her breast but it was not there to be found, for Elbert Grant noticed her departure; and as he had went there alone to get an opportunity to speak to her, it was all he wished, and as he followed her he was soon by her side. Cecil seemed very much surprised, but recovering her self possession, she bowed a cold good evening to Elbert Grant, who, scarcely noting the condescension, sprang to her side and with hurried and passionate vehemence, exclaimed:

"Oh, Cecil! Precious Cecil, can I not hope yet? will you not give me one hope to cling to; 'tis hard to part from my heart's idol, give it up forever?"

Cecil Gray would have given the world to soothe his sorrow, but she could not give up the thought of a glittering fortune, and striving to speak with more determination, she replied to his passionate appeal:

"Elbert Grant, there is many a fairer form than mine, many a brighter eye, a sweeter smile that can live for you, go and seek."

"So," said Elbert, "you bid me go, quit the land of my nativity forever; yes, I will go, but not to seek at your command, but go retaining the undying love within my breast for you. Farewell—Oh! Cecil Gray, remember!"

He departed, and it was well for Cecil, as Walter E—— was not long waiting for her but was soon by her side, and with a look of some surprise, asked: "Why this seclusion, fair Cecil, when so many are waiting your coming?" and pointing at the same time to the dancers, said, "there is no life without you." Cecil could scarcely suppress a tear as she took his arm to resume her place among the dancers.

The music soon was hushed, the sound of rushing feet was still, and quiet reigned once more at Mrs. Wilson's. Two o'clock found Cecil and Walter Earnest on their way home. Walter E—— was silent for some moments, when he suddenly turned to Cecil and asked her if she had seen Elbert Grant at the party, or whether she had spoken to him or not. Cecil would fain have denied speaking to him, but she feared she had been discovered; and as she answered and told him where she had seen him, W. Earnest felt a pang of jealousy, and with a slight tremor in his voice that betrayed the workings of his passion, he remarked that E. Grant did not remain long at the party, and inquired—

"Were you the cause of his sudden departure? I say, Cecil, be candid with me."

"Perhaps I was," replied Cecil.

"Perhaps, you are not certain then; I am certain," said Walter Earnest. "for after looking in for a brighter eye and a

sweeter smile he departed. Beware! Cecil Gray," resumed Walter Earnest, "if there is any attachment existing between you and Elbert Grant, I am not the man to be deceived."

"Why do you speak thus?" said Cecil, "have I ever given you any reason to think that, after giving you my heart and hand that another is preferred."

"God forbid," said Walter Earnest, and after exchanging repeated vows of constancy, they separated at the door of Cecil's house.

Cecil Gray to the slumberless rest of an uneasy mind and Walter Earnest to bask in dreams of love and happiness.

CHAPTER IV.

Time wore on marked with a fleeting breath to Walter Earnest. How he longed to clasp Cecil Gray to his heart and call her wife; and with a growing impatience he again sought her father's residence, when, finding Cecil in all the charms of languid loveliness, he beseeched her, with all the eloquence of love, to set the day that would complete his happiness. She finally blessed him with the promise of an appointed day, which was the 4th of July, 185—.

Great preparations were being made at Gray Mount for the approaching event, which was to launch Cecil Gray on the ocean of matrimony. Oh, how happy was Walter Earnest, and with all the pride of a chosen he invited his numerous friends to partake of the good cheer of his wedding morn.

After inviting all that he could well remember—he did not forget to seek out Elbert Grant as one of the select invited. Ungenerous Walter, he only wished him to behold the consummation of his own misery; but Elbert Grant was gone. Walter made several inquiries as to where Elbert was gone but none led to his discovery. Walter Earnest, after finding his search fruitless, returned to his office and then with the help of various superfluities—pomatum and broad cloth—he soon came out a polished bridegroom.

And soon amidst the numerous congratulations of his friends, accompanied by them, he repaired to Gray Mount, where, after greeting the vast assembly there, and having been sufficiently flattered by all, he could wait no longer; and with what a happy smile did Walter Earnest stand by his fair bride, and with a clear deep voice vowed faith and constancy unto the end.

Cecil Gray's voice trembled as she was bade by the aged pastor to take Walter Earnest as her own forever. Her words were scarcely audible, such were the deep emotions of her heart. Yet, all thought Cecil Gray happy. How she wished she had never seen Walter Earnest; how she prayed that death might relieve her.

Ah, vain, vain, Cecil Gray, too late came your sad regrets, pledged, you are won as the wife of Walter Earnest, who thinks that he alone is beloved by you.

CHAPTER V.

Elegantly and expensively furnished was the future house of Cecil Earnest, with all the luxuries that southern wealth could afford; and after remaining a few days longer at her father's house, Cecil bade adieu to the scenes made dear by associations from childhood, and sought with Walter Ernest, the comforts of their own fireside.

In vain Cecil strove to be happy. All the endearing epithets that were all her own; all the tender smiles that Walter cast upon her, failed to call forth one beam of happiness. Yet Walter Ernest believed Cecil happy; believed that all her smiles were reflected from a true heart that lived for him alone.

How well did Cecil deceive him, making him content for a while with an outward show of affection. But it was not long so, Walter Ernest soon learned to feel wretched, to know that his wife did not exhibit the right kind of feeling for him. Labor was irksome to him, business lost the charm of steadiness, and after vainly trying something new, he gave up all enterprising pursuits and finally lapsed into listless inactivity.

Years rolled on and two lovely babes lived, but not to bless their unhappy union. How Walter Ernest worshipped his children, so did Cecil; yet despite their childish innocence they failed to unite those wretched hearts.

And at last when the tramp of war sounded throughout our beloved country, calling for every brave heart to join in the struggle for liberty and independence, gladly did Walter Ernest respond to its calling, and getting a commission as Captain he bade adieu to his precious children, Cecil and home, and with a noble band entered in active service in Virginia. No sad regrets, no sigh of grief were breathed by Cecil at parting; but as an unfaithful feeling of relief came over her as she gazed at the receding form of W. Ernest, she resolved to free herself from him forever. She knew well she could not present any reasonable demand for a divorce, and after reflecting long upon the subject, she concluded to leave her home accompanied by her children, and seek a home among some of her relatives in the North; and knowing Elbert Grant was there she wished, of course, to meet him.

As she one evening was pondering over her future determinations, and quietly looking on the innocent play of her children,—for she loved ever thus to be occupied—for Cecil idolized them both. As she was thus musing she heard a low knock at the door and rising to open it, she was accosted by a wayworn soldier, wearing the garb of a Confederate trooper. Bidding him welcome, and after setting before him some delicate refreshments, partly prepared by her own hands, Cecil ventured to ask his name, as there was something in his features that awakened tender memories of old in the bosom of Cecil Ernest.

“Grant is my name,” said the soldier.

"Grant! great God!" almost screamed Cecil. "are you Elbert Grant's brother; for, Oh, you are his image?"

"I am," quietly replied the soldier, "Elbert Grant is my brother; but," said he, "I must be going."

"Stay, stay," cried Cecil, "fear nothing; and tell me, oh, tell me!" she passionately exclaimed. "where Elbert Grant is?"

Leon Grant not seeming at all surprised at this demonstration of feeling in the fair Cecil, he answered:

"Elbert Grant, my brother, is an officer in the Federal army, madam; and being acquainted with the past history of his attachment to a lady in this country, Miss Cecil Gray, I believe, perhaps I am not mistaken in the person before me. Are you Cecil Gray?" but looking around,—"whose children are these two beautiful ones here? Are you married?"

"O, unhappy me!" exclaimed Cecil, "yes, married, and those angels are mine. And I am so wretched, for I never loved but one and that one is Elbert Grant, whose precious image haunts me night and day."

"Calm yourself," said Leon, "perhaps it will be some comfort to you to know that my brother still lives for you and you alone. And I have often heard him say, although you treated him so unkindly, yet it could never chill his undying affection for you,—but stop, madam, I must be going, and now that I can trust you, I must confess that I am a Federal soldier myself, or will be one as soon as I reach my brother's command on the banks of the Potomac."

"Then, you will see him!" passionately exclaimed Cecil, "tell him, O, tell him, how I still love him, how I have suffered for him; and that I would give the world to see him."

"But," said Leon, turning suddenly to Cecil. "where is your husband?"

"He was killed in the battle of Manassas," replied Cecil.

"So you are a widow. Is there any commands for my brother? I would be happy to be the bearer."

"Yes, yes, wait," said Cecil, and seating herself she wrote a hasty note as follows :

ELBERT GRANT, U. S. A.

Dearest Elbert—I know you will be surprised at the receipt of this, and too, from one you believe to have forgotton you and ceased to think of you. Your brother will tell you all. O, dear Elbert, how wretched I have been; how oft' have I wished myself dead for the cruel treatment you have received at my hands. O, Dearest Elbert, can you forgive me: one who has loved you so long. Comfort me, I am so wretched.

Your faithful

CECIL.

CHAPTER VI.

Leon Grant after many hair breadth escapes, finally reached

the northern camp on the banks of the Potomac, and after doffing his disguise he made himself known to his surprised and happy brother.

"Is it indeed you, Leon," said Elbert Grant, "how glad I am to see you? Any news of a rebel movement below?" said he, with some anxiety.

"All quiet," replied Leon, "passed right through the lines. Lee is calm as a summer's morn."

"I guess you are tired and would like some refreshments," said Elbert, and retiring into the tent, beckoned Leon to follow him. "Here is some good old madeira," said he, "will you try it?"

"Not until I have given you another slight surprise," said Leon, and searching in his overcoat he withdrew from one of its ample pockets a small package; after unfolding it he threw it to his brother, exclaiming: "there Ell. is something you are little looking for."

"What, a letter, and from whom?" inquired Elbert, and glancing at the name of the writer he hurriedly exclaimed: "Cecil Earnest, my God! what does this mean?"

"Be quiet," said Leon, "perhaps you can do something for the fair widow."

"My Cecil married, and a widow!"

"She told me so," said Leon, and after narrating his adventures, together with an account of Cecil and family, he added: "She would give the world to see you, Elbert."

"Did she say so, my poor Cecil? Yes, see her I will, though Lee sweeps the hordes of the north to the Red Sea. So, brother, come," said Elbert, "advise me, not another moment's rest can I have until I have gained the port where lies my own Cecil."

"Perhaps you had better wait. The army would not like to lose such an able officer. A few more months may put an end to this hated struggle, then you can greet Cecil 'neath the banner of peace."

CHAPTER VII.

We will now follow Walter Earnest in his dreary wanderings through the proud old State of Virginia.

After leaving home he reached Virginia in safety, and participated in several battles there, not receiving a single wound. He was finally sent with reinforcements to the valley of Mississippi. Walter Earnest cared but little for life, it had but little charms for him, yet he still worshipped his children; and but for them, he was often heard to remark, he would never dodge a cannon ball.

In the meantime Cecil's letters became less frequent, as she had an object in not wishing to receive any letters from him. As she found it necessary to remain at home we will explain her object: She knew that if Grant still lived that he would seek to find her; and, furthermore, she knew that Walter Earnest had

no intention of returning home until the war was over. So she knew if she circulated a report respecting the death of Walter, throughout the neighborhood, that it would be readily believed, and that if she ceased to write to him he would cease to write to her, thus confirming her story of his death. She acted accordingly, and soon she was known as the Widow Earnest.

She had heard from some source that Elbert Grant was on his way to see her. She, of course, was overjoyed at the thoughts of marrying him.

We will now leave her to her inglorious reflections and return to Walter Earnest, whose bravery and valor as a soldier and officer, had won him many friends; even his enemies were forced to confess their recognition of his brilliant achievements on the field of battle.

The rumor of an approaching battle was rife throughout the fair Mississippi valley, and every brave heart was ready to participate in its bloody scenes; and as they impatiently waited the signal for the strife they were not left in suspense, for soon the cannons were booming loud and long, shot and shell hailed rife o'er the battle ground; groans of the wounded and dying were heard above the crack of the unerring rifle. And in the midst of the heartless strife was seen a steed and rider plunging thro' the mass of struggling souls, and high above the flashing artillery was heard the tones of command from a deep clear voice, which, none that knew could fail to recognise as the voice of Walter Earnest.

He met the deathly missiles with unwavering bravery. And when the smoke died away, leaving the ground victorious to our Southern boys, we see the same noble officer charging through the camps, bearing from the ground a rifle, saddle bags, holsters, &c., as trophies of the Shiloh fight. His face is unusually pale, and as we scan his features more closely, we can see the workings of deep emotions.

Halting at his tent and throwing the bridle carelessly to his charger he left him to graze at will, while he proceeded to display his won treasures to the gaze of his admiring friends.

On a carved silver plate, the mounting of the holster, was engraved the name of E. Grant, Col. commanding 5th N. Y. Reg. Walter Earnest refused to answer any inquiries concerning his trouble, for all knew he was laboring under some new excitement. W. Earnest proceeded to empty the saddle bags of its contents, and among the many things it contained was the letter from Cecil to Grant, sent him by his brother Leon.

On, on, rushed Walter Earnest, with maddening fury, to the head quarters of his commander, demanding a furlough home, giving as his excuse and wish for such a sudden determination urgent business. Determined to rescue his children, that desire and the desire of revenge now alone filled his breast.

He determined to kill Grant if he ever crossed his pathway. How sweet to him was the thoughts of revenge.

Earnest failed to get a furlough at that time, but after repeated

applications finally succeeded in getting an unlimited one. Elbert Grant was an honorable man; O how cruelly he had been deceived by Cecil Earnest.

CHAPTER VIII.

The cool soft winds were wafting from the bowers the sweetest perfume of the lovely flowers. And as the evening shades grew dim upon the wide prairies of F—, still the form of a weary horseman is plainly visible, and as he urges his steed to a quicker pace we can see plainly that he is in a deep study. Sad is the expression of his noble brow, as he seems to be laboring under some deep emotions.

He starts suddenly as an old familiar way-sign greets his tearful eye. But it is not with a bounding home again does he quicken his pace; no, for he would fain enter his own neighborhood secretly, as a hunter wishing to deprive a tigress of her young.

Taking a secluded path through the skirt of a deep woodland adjoining his own possessions, wishing to avoid any encounter with familiar faces, he slowly and cautiously rode along, heed-ing not the shades of night that was wrapping all nature in its sombre mantle. His thoughts on his precious children and on bygone days.

He scarcely heeded a voice calling: "Walter, Walter Earnest; great God! is that you, when the whole country has been rife with the news of your death long ago, and your widow?"

Earnest not deigning any ceremony replied: "Yes, Sammy Richards, it is I."

Richards was an old friend and had suddenly confronted Walter in the forest on his way home from a hunt.

Earnest inquired anxiously: "Sam, is all right over there?" pointing to his own house.

Richards not waiting any further explanations replied: "Earnest, your widow is to be married to night to some grand fellow, I believe his name is Grant."

"To be married, great God, thinks me dead! Well, stop, Sam Richards, not a word of me—"

Walter Earnest would fain behold her.

"I would fain see if her voice trembles while giving the sacred vow. Let no one know I am about."

"All right," said Richards, "you know you can trust me."

Walter Earnest after leaving his steed securely bound in an adjacent wood, taking his gun with him, crept softly towards his dwelling.

As he drew near he beheld his house in a blaze of splendor, crowded with the élite of A—. He wanted only to see one form, to recognise one face.

Hour after hour went by, he wavered not. Patiently waiting he at last beheld Cecil. Magnificently attired in her wedding dress, hanging lovingly upon the arm of Elbert Grant.

All was commotion; every eye wished to behold the consummation of so much happiness.

As Cecil was breathing her fervent vow the crack of a pistol was heard, a scream, and the manly noble form of Elbert Grant was laid low in death. None knew there, from whence he had received his death portion. But all knew that Cecil Earnest's heart was well nigh broke.

CHAPTER IX.

Moaning with pain, lay Cecil Earnest. Heeding not the departure of her children as they stole softly from her chamber, and whispering: "there, let mama rest."

No, she knew not that she had gotten the last glimpse of their angel faces. On went the innocent ones until they were finally out of sight of the house, and revelling in their innocent amusements, they were suddenly alarmed by a noise behind them, and rising to flee homeward they were each called by name: recognizing their father's voice, they sprang to him, and clasping him lovingly around the neck, exclaimed:

"O papa, is this you? Have you come to see mama, she is so sick?"

"Hush, hush," said Walter, "make no noise, come with papa."

Following him in mute surprise they quietly obeyed, and taking a seat in the vehicle he had in waiting they were soon upon the road to St. L——, where they were to take a boat. His mother residing in M—— he intended having them reared under her charge.

CHAPTER X.

Cecil Earnest awoke from her fitful slumbers, and calling for her children she was frantic with despair when her maid informed her of their absence.

No one made any effort to recover them, for by that time Sam R——, knowing W. Earnest was gone, had made it known throughout the neighborhood that he had seen him. All knew it was just, that she well deserved her wretchedness. Few attended Cecil Earnest in her last hours but a faithful old servant and Leon Grant, who was with her untiringly. Elbert Grant, Lessie and Maud, the names of her children, were incoherently uttered in her last moments.

Oh! what a sad ending to one but for vanity would have been so happy.

In the quiet grave yard of A., is interred the unhappy Cecil Earnest, and above her written upon a marble slab is this inscription, by Leon Grant:

IN MEMORY OF

Cecil Earnest, whose undying devotion to one caused her to forget her duty as a wife to another—PEACE TO HER ASHES.

ROSA SHERWOOD;

OR, THE AVENGER.

CHAPTER I.

SILENCE reigned throughout the rebel camp on the banks of the Potomac.

The steady tramp of the sentinel was the only martial sound heard save the crack of a picket gun on guard, more frequently shooting at some passing game than at an enemy.

The soldiers were lounging around the tents in all the luxury of a rest after a fatiguing march of five days.

There was a group of fine looking fellows standing aloof from the rest enjoying a quiet confab, seeming to have no desire of disturbance from the rest of their fellow comrades.

"What a dreary life we lead here," said one; "without the smile of lovely woman Earth is indeed a wretched wilderness, made up with what is generally termed men, but truthfully speaking, a set of brutes."

"For my part," said another, whose scowling face and wicked looking eyes, proclaiming him one of the "homo genus" that cared but little for the fair sex, "for my part," said he, "I think men would get along better without ever getting a glimpse of the deceitful creatures."

"What, you, Valery!" said his comrade, "a man who I thought could scarcely endure the service, because it veiled him from the sight of some charming face."

"Not I, Nelson," replied Valery, "I've got enough of one girl in this world! I believe I did love her, but it is done and I can't help it."

"Done what?" said Nelson.

Valery Lee looked up surprised, and only replied:

"Tut, tut, I was only talking at random."

"So," said Nelson, "you will tell us no more of the 'fairy.' I dare say she has you irrevocably charmed." And the merry fellow broke forth into a loud laugh at the frowns on Valery's brow, called forth by his sentimental accusation.

"Not I," replied Valery, "there you are indeed mistaken."

"Well," said another, "I do not wish to be kept in this cruel war long, if I am to be kept from the sight of one bright eyed fairy, whose image reflects sunshine to my now lonely heart."

"Oh, if I was at home," said another, "I would show you that Susie was beloved by me; if I am one of the homeliest fellows in the whole company."

After this outburst of sentiment from our homely hero, the reply from one of his comrades was:

"Hush, hush, Harold ; you are not the only ugly fellow in the crowd, for look yonder!" pointing to a fellow comrade opposite him who was so intent on a piece of bacon and bread.

He did not seem to think there was no little sport going on at his expense.

"Hello there, Rufus!" said one of our chosen, "come over here."

Rufus, dropping the remainder of his grub, walked slowly over to our mess, inquired gruffly:

"What do you want with me?"

"We want to see whether you can beat "Bob Kendall," looking ugly or not."

"Suppose you represent your feelings in the way of grimaces on an occasion of a clean up of our army by 'Our Dearly Beloved Brudders,' just across the river," pointing to the Yankee forces.

"Well, Bob," said Rufus, goodnaturedly, "since we are the 'butt' to-night, suppose we make them all pay well for the exhibition!"

"Good," said Bob, and good, cried all. "I, for one," said a fun loving fellow, "will treat to some good old Monongahela—by the way, which is only a little sweetened water." (Aside.)

"Well, begin," said Bob.

Many a hearty laugh rang out that night, as Rufus's and Bob's exhibition was in process. And finally, as Rufus gained the victory, he was triumphantly carried on the shoulders of the mess, and being crowned the victor of the occasion, they set him down to a camp feast, to enjoy the glory of his triumph. Rufus was heard to remark in the course of his enjoyment: "Egad, there is something in being tarnation ugly, after all!"

Such were the many instances of amusement that relieved the dreariness of "camp life" among our "dear Southern boys."

To-night it seems that every face is lighted up with a smile of utmost contentment, as all are revelling in their various enjoyments.

All, save Valery Lee; whose surly countenance speaks plainly for him, that his thoughts are on other things.

He quietly takes a seat near a sentinel, whose gloomy tread is more in accordance with his feelings; and as it is somewhat of a secluded place, he contents himself by brooding over some past misfortune.

CHAPTER II.

An approaching footstep aroused the sentinel, and as the call for the "watchword" is given, it is quickly responded to, and

at the word "pass," a youth of apparently 18 or 19 years of age, enters the "rebel camps."

His face is one of extremely delicate mould; and as his voice is exceedingly musical, it naturally arouses a peculiar interest in the mind of the sentinel.

The sentinel kindly inquired, "where bound my young fellow?"

To which the youth replies, "I wish to see my brother, who is Captain of Company C., Regiment —."

"What is your name, my good fellow?"

"Mortimer Sherwood, sir, and my brother is Dwight Sherwood; perhaps you know him."

"Well, I think I do, but that is a real Northern name!"

"True, sir, we are both natives of the North, but as our father espoused the Southern cause, we of course, joined with him in the struggle. But my brother," resumed the youth. "I would like to get some directions as to where his tent is."

"Well, well," replied the sentinel, "go along, and as you pass No. 8, just to your right is Capt. Sherwood's tent."

"Thank you," said the youth, and moving on, soon gained his brother's tent. Entering quietly and finding his brother alone, soon makes himself known in the person of Rosa Sherwood in disguise.

"Ah! my little sister, I've been terribly uneasy about you, and now that you are here, I am still more at a loss to know how to shield you from discovery." Her woman's wit was ready, as she quickly replied :

"As for that, Dwight, just give me a more complete disguise, and allow me to serve you as a lackey."

"Capital," replied Dwight, "step behind that curtain, Rosa, and don this suit." At the same time displaying a ragged coat and pants and slouched hat. "At your service, Mademoiselle."

Rosa quietly obeyed, and as she again made her appearance, Dwight drew his sword in real anger; forgetting Rosa a moment, supposing her to be some thief, and when Rosa saw his mistake, she cried: "Oh! brother Dwight, don't you know me?" he was still surprised. But when she doffed her wig and displaying a wreath of golden curls, he went to her, and kissing her tenderly, said: "It is indeed you, my poor dear little sister Rosa, but your voice darling, had changed." She soon satisfied him, by opening her mouth and displaying at the same time, a small tube, the means of changing her voice.

"Well, Rosa, your disguise is complete, but why wish to remain so long? Why not do your work and go back again?"

"O! you know brother, I wait to listen and see if my name is ever mentioned by him, and if he intends to be faithful to me. I will do nothing, but just one hint to the contrary, and Valery Lee is —"

"Hush, hush, Rosa! His tent is but a few feet from here:

he may even now be listening to us. Step out Rosa, and let us look around, so that you can get used to the change."

Rosa stepped boldly out and as her brother whispered, would you like to see him? She gladly consented. So they were soon mingling in a crowd of soldiers, Valery Lee among the rest, who failed to recognize her. After Valery Lee had conversed with Mr. Mortimer Sherwood upon various subjects, he finally ventured to ask the fair youth if he was a relative of Miss Rosa Sherwood, of Lichfield?

"I am," said the youth, his face assuming an ashen hue.

"I know her well," said Valery Lee. "And as you are a relative, I suppose that you have a natural interest in her?" continued he.

"Certainly I have," said the youth, "and pray sir," resumed he, "may I ask what you know of my fair cousin, since you speak so confidingly to me?"

"I hope," said Valery Lee confidingly, "that you will not consider my trust presumptuous?"

"Not at all," replied the youth. "On the contrary, I consider myself highly honored with the confidence of a 'stranger.'"

"Well," resumed Valery Lee, "I once loved Rosa Sherwood, and but for the weakness of woman displayed in her, I would still love her; but again, that can never be. Although my comrades think me unmovable upon the subject of matrimony, yet, there is one dear creature that lives but a short distance from here, visited by me, when all think me taking my usual solitary walk. Yes, she is soon to be mine, my own Miriam. But sir, remember my confidence; although you are a stranger, but few know of my approaching union with the 'idol' of my heart, Miriam Ludlow."

"Good night," said the youth, suddenly turning from Lee, and resuming his walk, he soon entered Capt. Sherwood's tent.

CHAPTER III.

DWIGHT Sherwood entered his tent and beheld his beautiful sister in an agony of weeping. As she recognized her brother's footstep, she arose, and with a voice tremulous with a determined passion, she said, "Dwight, my own dear brother, it must be done. I have heard it all," and she almost shrieked, He is to be married soon to one Miriam Ludlow. He unconsciously gave me his confidence, supposing me to be only Rosa Sherwood's cousin, he told me all. So Dwight, it must be done!

"But when Rosa?" inquired Dwight.

"Oh!" said she, "the night that will consummate his fondest hopes, and that will be a seal to my lasting misery. I have promised to stand by you in this awful hour of revenge for wrongs that can never be revenged. Oh! revenge is sweet." said Rosa, "and I will have it."

"But how is it to be managed?" inquired Dwight, with anxiety.

"Well," said Rosa, "you must manage to get an invitation to the marriage, then——"

"Then what? my poor sister."

"Then, I tell you, my brother, all will be right."

"How will you manage, Rosa? Tell me quick, while you have a chance?"

Rosa drew from her pocket a small vial, containing the most deadly poison, and handing it to her brother, said, "that is for her," and this said, drawing from her bosom a gleaming stiletto, "this too, shall find its way to his heart!"

"As you please, Rosa," said Dwight, "but would to God, I could win you from such a terrible determination."

CHAPTER IV.

DAY after day rolled on, and Mortimer Sherwood was the regular attendant of Captain Sherwood, frequently serving Valery Lee's mess in the capacity of a lackey, but was never discovered. Finally Valery Lee's marriage eve arrived, and as Dwight and Mortimer Sherwood were privately invited, they made every preparation for the event, and repaired to Ludlow Manor, where, in all splendor of wealth and luxury, they found the mansion crowded with the fairest of Richmond's lovely daughters. And in the midst of all, was seen the beautiful bride, clad in robes of splendor. She was surpassingly beautiful, and as Rosa glanced at her happy countenance, a pang of regret entered her heart, but stifling her better feeling, she murmured, "Never! never! This night shall seal my determination."

The ceremony was over and all were revelling in the joy of a wedding feast. The lovely bride was seen to take a glass containing wine from a small table, and as she bowed gracefully, she drank a toast to all.

"Well done, my Miriam," said Valery Lee.

Miriam strove to reply, but the effort proved fruitless. She staggered and fell to the floor a stiffened corpse!"

Valery Lee was in an agony of grief, as he bowed in bitter wretchedness over the lovely form of Miriam cold in death.

A thousand inquiries were made concerning her sudden death. Not a suspicion crossed the mind of any one, that she had been poisoned.

Rosa Sherwood knew the source well, and as she chuckled in demoniac glee over her work, she departed with her brother, who by this time was terribly agitated, fearing Rosa's discovery; and as he again pleaded with her to return home, her only answer was:

"No, he shall go next! and then——"

"What? my poor wretched sister."

"I will go in the first fight, and hope I will receive my just

punishment, by a ball that will put an end to my miserable existence."

"O, Rosa! my poor sister."

"Hush, Dwight, your pleading is useless. I am determined."

They reached the camp, and entering their tent, they threw themselves upon their humble beds. But there was no sleep for wretched Rosa! Racked with the pain of bitter remorse, Morning dawned, and finding her still awake and poignantly sensible of her crime, the first thing she addressed to her brother, was the inquiry, "where is Valery Lee, has he arrived yet?" Just then Valery Lee accosted Dwight with :

"Good morning, Capt. Sherwood? I would like to get a little brandy," his voice was low and husky, and as he strove to converse with Dwight, he apologized for his stupor, as he called it, and without further ceremony he departed.

"Ah!" exclaimed Rosa, "so, sir deceiver, you are going to drink away your sorrow. Perhaps in the dawn of to-morrow, you will have more to brood over."

True enough, for on that solemn night, when all seemed wrapped in deepened sorrow, a form was seen creeping softly in the direction of Valery Lee's tent. And as it stealthily entered, all within was as still as death, save the troubled breathing of Valery Lee, who ever and anon, uttered the name of Miriam, in his sleep. Rosa could scarcely suppress a scream, as her feelings went forth in bitter agony at the sound of Miriam Ludlow's name uttered in such tender accents by the voice of one she once loved. She waited, soon Valery Lee turned restlessly over, and inquired of his mate, "Eh, Nelson, was that you?"

"What?" replied Nelson, half awake.

"I thought," said Valery, "I heard a heavy breathing near me, but I guess it was you."

"Yes," said Nelson, who was soon sound asleep.

Rosa was again assured of Valery Lee's deep slumber, and musing low to herself, "my hour has come, and his!" and plunging the dagger up to the hilt in his bosom, it done the wished for work. Valery Lee died without a groan. As Rosa withdrew the weapon, she directed her steps towards the river, avoiding the sentinels, she soon reached it : and after meditating a few moments upon the conclusion of her vengeance, she attached a stone to the fatal weapon, and casting it in the bubbling stream, it sank to rise no more.

"Well done, brave heart!" exclaimed the wretched girl, "he will never deceive another." Oh! my child, my precious child.

For a few moments, she gave up to her bitterness of grief, inventing the burning tears that told of her undying agony.

"It is done," again exclaimed Rosa, "and now," said she, "my time comes next!"

She retraced her steps cautiously, and regaining her brother's tent, she found him anxiously waiting for her. As she entered,

he arose, and embraced her tenderly, and in a voice of deep emotion, he exclaimed : "O ! my sister, would to God I could have spared you this misery!"

"Don't be troubled, dear brother, on my account. I will not be here long to give care to any one."

"O ! speak not so, my poor sister ! your brother can never be happy again."

"O ! dear brother, it is useless to repine at my sad fate, for I have brought it all upon myself, my own wretched imprudence. Life can never have any charms for me again, I do not wish to live. Yet I am not fit to die ! And, O ! I know he will not meet with a better fate in eternity ! It is meet that I should share it with him."

"O ! sister, can I not persuade you to return to our poor father and mother, and your child. O ! sister, your poor child!"

Hush, hush, brother ! say no more, you will drive me mad ! You know my purpose is fixed.

Rosa and Dwight retired early, and rising early the following morning, they sauntered leisurely along around the camps, and were repeatedly asked if they had heard of Valery Lee's death.

Of course, both feigned great surprise. And finally, the excitement died away, and no suspicions were ever aroused by Rosa Sherwood's (alias) Mortimer Sherwood's appearance.

CHAPTER V.

ALL around seemed calm, and even still, as daylight faded over plain and hill, the sentinels were keeping their regular guard, surrounded by the watchful pickets of Johnson's army. They had waited, it seemed, all day with patience, for a battle. As rumors had been afloat in camps for several days, of an approaching struggle with the enemy, who were then prying around to ascertain the strength of our brave band. And at last, when night came upon them, and still no signal for the strife, they all seemed satisfied that the enemy would not attack them in the night.

It was even so; but just as the golden sun arose clear and resplendent from out of the Eastern horizon, making every object look cheerful, covered with its bright beams, the signal for the approaching battle was heard, and "forward, march !" was responded to by our dear brave Southern boys, with a spirit that panted to meet the hated foe. On, on, they moved, their dazzling steel gleaming out in threatening vengeance. At last the battle began, the flashing artillery pealed forth in its deadly thunder; and as the unerring rifles crack, in the midst of the strife, they, too, make many a brave heart bite the dust. Hour after hour passed, and still the battle raged in unabated fury. O ! many, many sank to rise no more !

There was one brave form that fought unwaveringly, until at last, he fell mortally wounded, and as he cried for help, a sur-

geon was quickly by the side of the fair form, and as he bended gently over the beautiful face, its surpassing beauty spell-bound the kind hearted physician. And to use his own words, "sweeter voice never fell upon the ear of mortal man, a more beautiful face never met the admiring gaze of human." At last, he kindly enquired, "can you tell me where you are wounded?"

"Yes, yes, here," said the musical voice, laying a small white hand on one side, where the blood was gushing out profusely, which in the intensity of his excitement, the surgeon had failed to notice. He proceeded to rip open the close fitting soldier's jacket. When lo! a new wonder was displayed to him, and casting another glance at his patient's face, instead of the low soldier cap that almost screened a jetty black wig—it had fallen off and a cloud of golden curls shrouded the snow white brow of this lovely creature, corresponding so well with the soft blue eye, now almost dim with the dew of approaching death. All satisfied him that his patient was a lovely maiden in disguise.

"Call, call," she said faintly.

"Who would you see?" said the kind man."

"Call my brother, Dwight Sherwood, if you know him. He was near me when I fell." The surgeon obeyed, and soon returned with Capt. Dwight Sherwood. She made an effort to speak, but failed at first, her voice was so husky, that even when she did speak, her words were scarcely intelligible. But to the practiced ear of her brother, who had known and loved that voice from childhood, he understood all. "Dwight," said she, "you have been faithful to me, and O! brother, you know my sad story; but too well you know that this is the reward of revenge, which the Lord saith 'Is Mine.' I was not willing to wait His vengeance, I wreaked it myself, and now I go to be punished accordingly. Come nearer, brother. Tell my mother to raise my child in the fear of the Lord. Tell her to forgive my rashness, for O!" said she, "I refused to listen to her kind counsel, she begged me to leave it all to God. I would not bury me brother, in some lone spot, where there is no fear of intrusion, where my body will rest. O, God! have mercy on my soul! Tell not my child of my sad end; let her be stranger to the history of wretched mother. Farewell."

Thus died the beautiful, and once beloved Rosa Sherwood whose name may be recognized by many.

Her brother buried her in a sweet secluded spot, and planted a simple rose bush over her grave: "emblem of her that was once pure and lovely." No marble slab is erected there to tell the passer by whose remains are interred in that beautiful spot. But, Ah! Dwight Sherwood will never forget it. But kneeling in an agony of weeping over her lovely form, he vowed to make that place a spot for sacred worship, in memory of the sister of his childhood. There he will go when no eye beholds his sorrow, loving her memory dearer than the pilgrim, who consecrates his worship to the Temples of Mecca,

